

TO: Mayor and City Council
THROUGH: Matt Fulton, City Manager
FROM: Sherrie Le, Assistant City Mgr.
DATE: February 8, 2016
SUBJECT: Request for Funding Support for 2016 LOOP Operations



City of West St. Paul

BACKGROUND INFORMATION: The LOOP, West St. Paul's circulator bus, is a service developed out of the partnership between the City, Dakota County's Communities for a Lifetime Initiative and Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul. The service provides transportation for older adults in West St. Paul to Robert Street businesses and Thompson Park, where senior programming is held. This is the second year of service for the LOOP and our riders greatly appreciate the service. We continue to receive nothing but rave reviews.

In 2015, the City contributed \$12,000 toward the operational cost of the LOOP. That financial support was very much needed and appreciated. The funding went directly to operational expenses for the DARTS bus and drivers. The hours of service are between 10 am and 3 pm on the first four Wednesdays of each month. The cost for 2015, which was not a full year, was \$28,383. We started regular service on May 1, 2015 after a six week pilot. The hourly bus service charge was \$55.00 per hour per bus for the pilot. The charge for the regular service was \$77.00 per hour per bus.

DARTS has graciously agreed to keep the hourly rate the same in 2016. The cost per month for two buses running during those hours is \$770.00. In 2016, the buses will operate for 48 weeks. The cost for the DARTS contract comes to \$36,960. Neighbors Inc. is the fiscal agent for Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul and handles the income and expenses for the LOOP. We have a long way to go in 2016 to find adequate funding. To help fill the funding gap for 2016, staff is requesting the City contribute up to \$15,000.

Last year we also received donations and sponsorships from businesses, Communities for a Lifetime Initiative, the CDA and individuals of \$16,384. Businesses that sponsored the LOOP in 2015 include:

South Robert Street Business Association
Jerry's Foods
Xcel
Pace's Service Center
Carbone's

Anonymous Donor
Walmart Foundation
Anchor Bank
McDonalds

We commend them for their commitment to the Community. We are working hard on raising money for the LOOP for fiscal year 2016. Counting leftover funds from 2015, we have approximately \$5,000 for 2016 with additional commitments of \$1,000 from

Xcel and \$2,000 from Jerry's Foods, and \$5,000 from the South Robert Street Business Association totaling roughly \$13,000. Donors provide the money directly to Neighbors, Inc. or in some cases to the City.

FISCAL IMPACT: Staff recommends funding for this project from available fund balance in the General Fund but be coded to the Robert Street Improvement Project.

		Amount
Fund:	551	
Department:	43121	
Account:	41113	\$15,000

STAFF RECOMMENDATION: Staff requests approval of funding for the LOOP, payable to Neighbors Inc., the fiduciary agent for Living Longer and Stronger in West St. Paul.